



SAN JUAN COUNTY COLORADO

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February 13, 2013

The Honorable Michael Bennet
458 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

We are writing to commend and support your continued work to protect the Hermosa Creek watershed. San Juan County supported the legislation you introduced last Congress, and we encourage you to move the legislation as expeditiously as possible through the Senate in the current session.

Your Hermosa Creek legislation is based on the work and recommendations of the Hermosa Creek Workgroup (HCW), which were released publicly in early 2010. The Workgroup process was open and transparent, and involved participation from a broad spectrum of interests in the region. Hunters, anglers, hikers, mountain bikers, water providers, motorized recreationists, outfitters, miners, scientists, conservationists, and many others, met for nearly three years to define shared values and recommend solutions for the area's management. The effort represents a true community-based effort.

San Juan County supported your Hermosa Creek legislation in the 112th Congress, and continues to do so. La Plata County also remains supportive, as does the City of Durango. Additionally, over 70 local businesses have expressed support for the legislation, citing not only the watershed and recreational values of the area, but the economic contributions to the region through tourism and recreation. Our communities, along with others in and around the San Juan Mountains, depend on outdoor recreation and tourism as a critical part of our economic base. The thousands of outdoor enthusiasts who visit Hermosa Creek every year will benefit directly from its protection, and continue to support the critical backbone of the region's economy.

San Juan County stands ready to help you move this important, community-based legislation forward. Again, we commend you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Ernest F. Kuhlman, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners